

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-  
Presbyterian Church, 10  
Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic.,  
3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS**

**LESSON 11**

**THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Jesus returned to Capernaum. He had taken the city as the centre from which He travelled to the neighbouring region to evangelize. Our present study of His life shows Jesus' communication with a cross-section of the people – the Jewish leaders, a Roman centurion, a widow from Nain, the disciples of John the baptizer, the people of the cities in the Galilee area, a sinful woman who came to the house of a Pharisee who had invited Jesus to his home. The accounts of these events and places provide some

valuable insights about the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, some aspects of the local culture of the people, and the spiritual responses of the people towards Jesus' preaching and miracles. In addition to all these, more is learned about the Lord Jesus Christ, saving faith and love of one towards another.

**UNDERSTANDING**

***Faith of the Centurion***

*Luke 7: 1-10, Matthew 8:5-13.*

When Jesus returned to Capernaum, it was made known to Him that a certain centurion's slave was suffering from paralysis and was about to die. The centurion's identity is not revealed for his name is not important. The focus was on his authority and position in the Roman army. He was a commander of a Roman military division numbering one hundred soldiers, hence the title "centurion". He was a Gentile. Generally the Jewish public despised the Roman army because they were their oppressors. But there was something special about this Roman centurion. The Jews loved him. In fact, when he asked a favour from the leaders of the Jewish community to approach Jesus to heal his dying slave, they gladly did it. Not only did they quickly entreat Jesus to go and heal his slave, they said to Jesus that the centurion had built a synagogue for them. This Gentile Roman centurion was unlike others. Another commendable thing about him was that he loved and cared for

his slaves. He was different from the other masters in the way that he treated his slaves. In those days, slaves who were sold to their masters were poorly treated. There were many cases of ill-treatment of slaves. A runaway slave would be punished with death.<sup>1</sup>

This Roman centurion, who had not seen Jesus, must have heard of Jesus' power to heal all kinds of diseases and sicknesses. Therefore, he requested this favour from his Jewish friends. Jesus proceeded to his house. When Jesus and his entourage were not far from the centurion's house, the centurion sent some of his friends to meet Him and to tell Him that He did not need to enter his house but only needed to speak the word and his slave would be healed. What a demonstration of faith in Jesus! One other possible reason why he asked Jesus not to enter his house could be his understanding and respect for the Jewish custom of restraining themselves from setting foot onto a Gentile home. Whatever be the case, the most significant thing and certainty in this account is that he had faith in the power and authority of Jesus over sickness. He explained that just as he had power and authority over his soldiers who would do whatever he commanded them, Jesus could just say the words of healing, and the sickness would be gone. It must also be noted that the centurion disclaimed any

right of worthiness in building the synagogue for the Jews. This centurion was indeed special.

Jesus marvelled at his faith. Jesus mentioned that his faith was far superior to that of any that could be found in Israel. Jesus remarked that many like him from the east and the west would enjoy the privilege of being seated with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Messianic kingdom. The Jews themselves looked forward to this blessed time when they would sit with the patriarchs in the Messianic kingdom. The Jews regarded the Gentiles to be unworthy of this privilege. The Jews took for granted that just because they were related to the patriarchs by birth, they could automatically enjoy this privilege. They were mistaken for they would be excluded because of their unbelief or corrupt faith. Salvation was not according pedigree.

The centurion's slave was healed at that very moment when Jesus, having marvelled at his faith, sent his friends back to his home. The slave was completely healed. What does this miracle teach?

### ***Compassion for the Widow of Nain***

*Luke 7:11-17.*

The next day Jesus and His disciples travelled to Nain, a city that was about twenty-five miles southwest from Capernaum. Along the way, many more joined them and by the time they reached the city, there was quite a crowd with them. As Jesus approached the gate of this walled city, a funeral procession was taking place. A dead man

<sup>1</sup> The Apostle Paul passionately called on Philemon to receive his runaway slave, Onesimus, when he returned to him as his brother in Christ (Philemon 1:15, 16).

was being carried. The deceased was the only son of a widow who was weeping, and many were with her.

Jesus' attention was drawn to the sorrowing widow and not the deceased. Jesus immediately had compassion on her. She was weeping and Jesus said to her, "Weep not." Then Jesus moved to the bier and touched it. The pall-bearers stopped and stood still. Jesus commanded the corpse with the words, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." And the young man, who was dead, became alive again. He sat up and began to speak. Jesus then handed him over to his mother. One cannot fail to notice the series of actions of Jesus the moment the funeral procession came into view: He *saw*, He *had compassion*, He *said* to the woman, He *came* and *touched* the bier, He *said* to the dead, and He *delivered* him to his mother! This is one of the few times Jesus healed without being asked. The fact that Jesus saw the woman and had compassion on her indicates that Jesus' focus was on the woman rather than raising the corpse. The woman suffered a double sorrow. She had lost her husband, and now her only son, the one on whom she depended for her livelihood.

Jesus revealed to us that He cares for those who mourn for they shall be comforted. Jesus turned the woman's double sorrow to joy. Jesus demonstrated that He has power over death. He conquered death. The crowd responded with fear, and they were glorifying God, saying that "a great prophet is risen up among us." Some

understood Jesus by identifying Him as a prophet because in the Old Testament, both Elijah and Elisha raised the dead. Others rightly recognized that God was in their midst. Jesus' fame began to spread further.

This is a stupendous miracle performed by Jesus. Any other explanation that denies the reality and historicity of the miracle must be rejected. The Christian faith rests on the fact that Jesus resurrected on the third day after His death. To give any explanation other than what the Scripture text factually and plainly records is to deny the deity of Jesus and His power. If Jesus did not have the power to raise the young man, He could not have resurrected too on the third day after His death. And in the words of Paul, the Apostle, "we are of all men most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:19). Contrast and compare this miracle with the previous and see what you may find.

### ***Commendation of John the Baptizer***

*Matthew 11: 2-19; Luke 7: 18-35*

John was in prison. His disciples regularly visited him and informed him of the works of Jesus. He sent two of his disciples to Jesus to inquire whether He was the Messiah or should they look for another. At that very moment, Jesus healed many of their sicknesses, and plagues, and delivering those who were possessed with demons, and gave sight to the blind. John's disciples witnessed the works of Jesus. Jesus then sent John's disciples off to tell

John what they had heard and seen.

When John's disciples were gone, Jesus turned to the multitude and said to them concerning John. Jesus commended John for being the greatest of all the prophets who were before him. Jesus pointed out that John's personality and function was in fulfilment of Malachi 3:1—"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts." John had the special position and privilege of being the "messenger" who prepared the way for the Lord (the Christ). No other prophet was given this special office. By the questions He posed to the multitude and His comments, the citing of the fulfilment of Malachi's prophecy, Jesus made a veiled claim to deity.

Jesus then took the opportunity to pay a great tribute to John. Jesus remarked, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." John was the last and the greatest of all the prophets since he was the one who ushered in the first coming of Jesus Christ. And yet Jesus also said that "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." This may seem confusing: how can the least be greater than the greatest. The reason is that of destination. John the Baptist was a prophet that the people regarded very highly but

compared to the one who is in heaven, the latter was better than John the Baptist. The people were focused on earth and earthly accolades but Jesus wanted them to focus on heaven, which is eternal. It is not what position you hold or title you possess on earth. The crux of the matter is whether you will have a place in heaven. Jesus identified John with Elijah for it was a belief then that Elijah would reappear.<sup>2</sup> Malachi refers to the second coming of Christ which the people mistook for the first. The second coming was in power whereas the first was born of a virgin as a child. John was the fulfilment of Malachi's prophecy in the sense that he came in "spirit and power" of Elijah (Luke 1:17).<sup>3</sup>

The response to Jesus' words on John was divided. All the people that heard Jesus, including the tax-collectors, who submitted to John's baptism, acknowledged the ministry of John before God. But the Pharisees and lawyers who were also there, rejected God's purpose in Jesus' mission, and this is because they rejected John's baptism. In other words, those who submitted themselves to John's baptism of repentance would accept Jesus' mission as a fulfilment of God's purpose, to which John was a herald.

<sup>2</sup> Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

<sup>3</sup> Luke 1:17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Jesus went on to illustrate how inconsistent was the attitude of the people towards John's ministry and His. Jesus described these people who were like children sitting in the market place, refusing to dance when music was played; and who refused to mourn when they played funeral. Jesus' point was: when John the baptizer came, neither eating or drinking, they said that he had a demon. On the other hand, when Jesus came, eating and drinking with the publicans, they also criticized Him. These people were not responding correctly to the witness of John and Jesus. However, God's purpose and plan through the ministries of John and Jesus would eventually be justified.

### ***Denunciation of the Cities of Galilee***

*Matthew 11:20-30.*

Jesus reproved three cities for their unbelief and their unwillingness to repent. The cities, Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were located in the northern tip of the Sea of Galilee. They were close to one another. Jesus declared that if the stupendous miracles, which He performed in Chorazin and Bethsaida, had been done in Tyre and Sidon (Gentile cities), the inhabitants of those cities would have repented in sackcloth and ashes long ago. And if the great miracles, which He performed in Capernaum, had been done in Sodom (the most wicked city in all of the OT), Sodom would not have been destroyed implying that the

Sodomites would have repented too.

It is a common expectation among men that where miracles are performed, the spiritual impact on the people in these places would be the greatest. But that is not necessarily so. This is proven by Jesus' experience. The fact of the matter is that people need to see beyond the miraculous. Jesus' miracles and all biblical miracles were sign-miracles that were intended to lead people to see beyond the miraculous. The focus must be on the teachings and claims of the person. Jesus preached repentance and the kingdom of God. They needed to repent but they did not. They ought to see that Jesus is God but they rejected Him. The lesson is that mere experience and witnessing of miracles does not and cannot change a person, but the willingness of the heart to repent after having heard the message. That was the mistake of the people of the three cities. Israel always prided herself as a godly city chosen by God above all other cities. To be compared to these hated Gentile cities including the heinous city of Sodom was a great insult to every Israelite. Jesus was trying His utmost to wake the hardened hearts of the citizens of these cities using shock treatment.

Having reproved the inhabitants of the Galilean cities, Jesus concluded this with the people by thanking and praising His Father who is the Lord of heaven and earth. God had hidden. He then declared that His Father had given Him all things, and that not one man can fully

know His Father, except through the Son, and even to whomsoever the Son would reveal Him. Then Jesus ended with an invitation to all those who were heavy laden, and He would give them rest. The harsh words were spoken to evoke a response of repentance and turning to God as seen in the gentle words of Christ.

John was perplexed, the men of that generation were unreasonable, and the cities were indifferent. It would seem that Jesus' mission was a failure and that Jesus should have given up. But Jesus did not give up. He prayed and worshipped God, the Father. This is a comforting lesson for all who meet with the same attitude as they try to serve Him. In His prayer, Jesus mentioned two groups of people: the "wise and prudent" and "babes". The wise and prudent were those who looked at Jesus with their natural abilities and intellect. They tried to come to a conclusion concerning Jesus based on the evidence and knowledge that they had gathered. But they had limited evidence. They rejected the revelation given by God through Jesus. They wanted Jesus on their terms. According to them, Jesus could not be the Christ. This is precisely the trouble with much of today's scientific and theological thinking. When men try to subject God to scientific examination and a theological straitjacket in their understanding of God, there will be great difficulties and distortion of God's truth. On the other hand, "babes" are those who are willing to be taught. These people

realize their inadequacy and are willing to receive or learn like innocent babes who trust their parents without a shadow of doubt. Jesus said that these are the people who will receive His teachings that the wise and prudent will miss. Jesus thanked God that the revelation of truth is not limited to the "wise and prudent" but it is available to anyone who is willing to receive it. God's revelation of truth is open to all who want to receive. Regardless of one's ability and intellect, one must come to Jesus with humility and a receptive heart to accept Him who is the Truth.

Jesus declared that all things concerning God His Father can only be learned from Him because the Father revealed them to Him, who is His Son. The Son knows the Father, and the Father the Son. No one can fully know the Father except the Son and no one can know the Son except the Father reveals to whomsoever He wills. The "wise and prudent" by rejecting Jesus thought that they are wise and intellectual, but are actually fools for they had missed the greatest wisdom that any man can ever hope to possess, the wisdom of God.

Hence Jesus broke forth with the most wonderful invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest into your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Jesus had the legalists who were labouring to gain righteousness and salvation

through their works, and those who were burdened with sin. Jesus invited them to “yoke”, receive Him, and be His disciple and learn from Him, and they would find rest in their souls. Jesus their Teacher is gentle and lowly and they would find their yoking with Him not that difficult and heavy but easy and light. This message of Jesus is still open to all those who would be “babes” and come and be yoked with Him.

If this is true, why do we sometimes find our Christian walk so hard and even tiresome?

***Love of the Sinful Woman in the House of Simon the Pharisee***

*Luke 7:36-50.*

This incident probably took place in Capernaum. Jesus was an invited guest of Simon the Pharisee. No reason was given why he invited Jesus; but perhaps it was one of prestige and pride to have the most famous rabbi in all of Israel to grace his home. Jesus went to his house. According to custom, Jesus removed His sandals, and was reclining at the table. He reclined on His left side thus His feet were outward. As usual there were others who were standing at the doorway not allowed in but merely watching with envy. Suddenly out of the crowd, a woman came into the house and stood behind Jesus' feet, and began weeping and her tears fell on Jesus' feet. To use one's tears to wipe the feet of Christ is an act of greatest devotion that man could ever hope. Then she let down her

hair and wipe his feet. It was a shameful thing for a Jewish woman to let down her hair in public, but she did not care. She kept on wiping as she wept. Furthermore, she kept kissing Jesus' feet. This was an act of supreme devotion, and then she kept anointing His feet with the ointment which she brought with her.<sup>4</sup>

When Simon, the Pharisee, saw what she was doing, he said in his mind, “This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touched him: for she is a sinner.” The Pharisee's thinking indicates that he assumed that Jesus was not a prophet or what He claimed to be. If Jesus were a prophet, He would not have allowed the woman to do what she was doing to Him. Jesus would have known her background and find her unclean according to the standards and traditions of the Jews. Jesus knowing the cynical thoughts of Simon asked his permission to speak. Jesus told a parable. A certain money lender had two debtors. One owed him five hundred pence; the other fifty. Neither had the money to pay. The lender forgave both of them. Jesus posed a question to Simon, “Which of them will love him most?” Simon's answer showed a speck of irritation: “I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most.” Simon the Pharisee could not understand grace. He was a “law” man. Of course, Simon was

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<sup>4</sup> All the verbs describing her action are in the Greek imperfect tense indicating that it was a continuous action.

right in his answer, but his attitude was not.

Jesus then turned to the woman and called Simon to look at her too. Jesus addressed Simon that though He was his invited guest, since the time He came in, he did not extend to Him the common customary gesture of hospitality: water for washing His feet, but this woman had been washing His feet with her tears; he did not give Him a kiss (also a common custom of the Middle East), but this woman had been kissing His feet; he did not anoint His head (the highest part of the body) with oil, but this woman had been anointing His feet (the lowest part of the body) with ointment. Jesus then applied the lesson of the parable. Jesus said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven." The verb form for "are forgiven" is the perfect passive form, meaning that her sins were forgiven in the past, and stand forgiven. In other words, she must have heard Jesus' preaching and had repented, and her sins had been forgiven before she came into the house. She came to show her love for Jesus. She had been forgiven much and she loved much. The other guests began to say within themselves, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" To them only God can forgive sins. So in their thinking, Jesus was claiming deity. Jesus knew their thoughts. Jesus did not address them. Instead He turned to the woman and reassured her, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

### SUMMARY

Jesus continued His preaching tour of Galilee. In His encounter with the Roman centurion, Jesus expressed great amazement at his faith and healed his dying slave. The centurion also showed much love and generosity towards the Jews by building a synagogue.

Jesus then went the city of Nain with many of His disciples. At Nain, He had compassion on a widow whose dead son the people were carrying for burial. Jesus approached and comforted her, and raised her son from the dead, and delivered the deceased now alive to his widowed mother.

Jesus met the disciples of John the baptizer, who was perplexed whether Jesus was the Christ or they should look for another. Jesus sent them back to John with a message. Jesus then paid tribute to John that he is the greatest of all the prophets who were before him. Some people received the teachings of Jesus, but the Pharisees and lawyers rejected both the preaching and teaching of John and Jesus. Jesus rebuked the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum for the hardness of their heart. For if the miracles were done in the cities of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom, the people there would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. Jesus warned the people of the coming of the day of judgement when everyone must give an account of himself.

Jesus was an invited guest of Simon the Pharisee. Reclining at the dinner table, a woman suddenly came into the house to



where Jesus was. She was a sinner and showed her great love for her Saviour. Simon was cynical towards the woman and doubted Jesus' claim of who He is. Jesus taught him by relating a parable of a creditor and his two debtors.

**PRACTICAL VALUE**

We have a wonderful and almighty Saviour. We are comforted by Jesus' communication and interaction with the masses. We see the many proofs of Jesus' claim to deity. He has the power of life and death. He knew the inner thoughts and imagination of men. We see His compassion on all those who sorrow and are in need. Turn to Jesus now, He will be there for you. He taught great truths concerning His relationship with God the Father. We learn that salvation is by grace. It is by receiving Jesus Christ and accepting the truths that He taught. It is not by human reasoning and ideas that God is known. The knowledge of God is by divine revelation through His Son Jesus.

In our society, there are persons who are being despised and disdained. But such persons can turn out to be the best of people, and persons who are believers of Jesus and who love God are a blessing to others. Be a blessing to others instead of a burden. In this regard, we should heed the invitation of Jesus to come to Him, anyone who is burdened with the troubles and cares of this world, and who is grief-stricken with his sins. Jesus only can meet our innermost

needs. He died for your sins and He is the only One who can forgive you of your sins.

Like the sinful woman whose sins were forgiven, let us love Jesus with all our heart and soul, not minding the shame that sometimes we bear for His sake. AMEN

**DHW BIBLE CLASS**

**LESSON 11**

**THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**MONDAY: Luke 1-10, Matthew 8:5-13.**

**TUESDAY: Luke 7:11-17.**

**WEDNESDAY: Matthew, 11:2-19; Luke 7:18-35.**

**THURSDAY: Matthew 11:20-30.**

**FRIDAY: Luke 7:36-50.**

**Discussion Questions**

- Who pleaded with Jesus to help the centurion? Why? What does it teach us?**

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**2. What was it about the centurion that marvelled Jesus?**

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**3. Why did Jesus raise the widow's son from the dead, when no one asked Him to?**

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**4. What effect had Jesus' healing of the widow's son on the community in Nain?**

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**5. What could have caused John to question whether Jesus was indeed the Messiah?**

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**6. How did Jesus answer John's disciples and help strengthen his faith?**

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**7. What is the basis for rendering future retribution?**

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**8. What confidence did Jesus express, what claims did He make for Himself, and what did He command and offer?**

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**9. How did Jesus prove to Simon the Pharisee that it was not ignorance that made Him tolerate the woman's touch?**

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**10. What evidence is there that something had already happened in this woman's life and that she was acting under deep emotion?**

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**11. What did Jesus look for in those who receive forgiveness?**

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**12. What have you learned best in this lesson?**

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